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**EDUCATION IN THE MUSICAL CONSERVATORIUM  
IN KOLOZSVÁR/CLUJ  
1819-1869**

Theses of the Doctoral (PhD) Dissertation

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## Topics, personal motivation and historiography of research

The foundation of the “Muzsikai Conservatorium” (Musical Conservatorium) of Kolozsvár/Cluj and its objectives, as well its achievements represent phenomena that are not unique in the history of Hungarian music and education, but due to the particularities of contemporary Transylvanian society, politics, as well as culture and civilization, they comprise a special segment in the history of Hungarian music and professional education. Scientific research takes special interest in this institution also because of its priority in the institutional history of vocational (musical) education, given the fact that the school of the Musical Society is the first institution to offer musical education in Hungarian language: since 1819 it which functioned uninterruptedly (excepting two brief periods of inactivity) for a decade and had influence over the entire metropolitan area of the city of Kolozsvár/Cluj, and, in a larger sense, over the entire culture of historic Transylvania.

Syntheses (Bényei 1994, Fazakas 2003) and studies (Homolya 1965, Szávai 1976, Tallián 2015), regarding the consolidation of the institutional structures of modern European and Hungarian education dedicate chapters to the evolution of Transylvanian education. This theme is prominently featured also in the monographs dedicated to institutes of arts established in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and still functioning today. Results of previously conducted researches reveal offer valuable data concerning local history or history of music and

education (see Steiner 1993, Hondré 1996, Tari –Sz. Farkas 2005).

Cultural endeavor of the city of Kolozsvár/Cluj at the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century, events organized by the local theatre and the history of education in the Roman-Catholic, the Reformed and the Unitarian College have been continuously researched starting with the 1880s by scholars specializing in the history of culture, theatre and education of this region.

At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the “last watchtower of the musical globe” – as Kolozsvár/Cluj is called (Tallián 2015) – was not a small province town, but a cultural centre, and so it is by no coincidence the school of the Musical Society was established right here in 1819, as a result of ample social mobilization. Due to inconclusive use of sources, unattainable or missing archive documents, previous researches could not agree on matters such as the name of the institution, the year of establishment, the faculty body or the specific activities conducted within the institution.

There have been publications pertaining to the role of the Musical Conservatorium, the person of its musical directors and – in spite of the scarce source material – the authors have underlined in each case the regional and national importance of establishing an institution dedicated to musical education (Lakatos 1939, 1977a, Ruzitska 1953, Fancsali 2014). The particular aspects of professional education conducted within the institution have been barely mentioned (Benkő 1996, Tar 2012), while the dimensions of its pedagogic concept have been completely omitted.

## Objectives, sources and methodology

The doctoral thesis aims to offer a more realistic and more comprehensive analysis of the evolution of the Musical Conservatorium of Kolozsvár/Cluj, presenting a chronology of the first fifty years of existence, its role in the city's life and the quality of its level of instruction. Researches conducted within the scope of my PhD paper focused on so far unknown archive and other contemporary sources, as identified in different collections and followed by publication and interpretation, assimilating the PhD-thesis mostly to a case-study. The interdisciplinary approach of institutional history requires the examination and confrontation of different material types: primary sources (official publications of the Conservatorium, its reports of activity, memoranda, proceedings) and secondary sources (contemporary press, private correspondence, theatre and concert posters).

Following the chronologic presentation, the identification of the correct name of the institution, as well as its varying functions, the paper examines also course material used within the framework of institutional musical education (contemporary musical oeuvre, pieces by lesser known authors, auxiliary materials used for didactic purposes, works by faculty members). Preferred teaching methods as well as their brief presentation also form the object of a distinct chapter. Several sub-chapters are dedicated to the legacy of *Ruzitska György*, former director and a key figure in the evolution of the school of the Musical Society,

reconstructing his portrait as an academic and analyzing his work meant for and used in the educational process.

The annex of the PhD-paper comprises several documents originating from the former collections of the Musical Society, as they haven't been previously published and represent sources of vital importance for the scope of this research. Documents published in the annex (manuscripts and printed documents, fragments or entire pieces of sheet music) should prove useful for further examination of resources, as well as for the familiarization with specific documents pertaining to the history

## Research hypotheses

1. What kind of ideological, political or personal circumstances influenced the establishment of the Musical Society and its school? Which were the turning points in the history of the institution in the period between 1819-1869? What do we know about its faculty members, students, what were the grounds and structures of the instruction?
2. Is it possible for society established by common law to be considered a stabile educational institute, when it doesn't solely function as a school, bears different titles, interrupts its activities twice and has no premises on its own? Can we relate the actions of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Musical Society, the *Muzsikai Szorgalom Társaság* (Musical Diligence Society) or the Musical Conservatorium?

3. Did the presence of permanent cultural transfers within the framework of the multifaceted Musical Society contribute to the implementation of the professional level or the lowering of standards? To what extent did the collaboration with other art and educational institutes or societies (the National Theatre of Kolozsvár/Cluj, the Roman-Catholic, the Reformed and the Unitarian College) had a decisive impact on the activities of the Musical Conservatorium?

4. To what extent was the process of education influenced by the status of its director, *Ruzitska György* as functioning in dual capacity: both as a music teacher, as well as a composer?

5. What is the extent of similarities between the Musical Conservatorium of Kolozsvár/Cluj and similar institutions as far as institutional history and organization is concerned? Does the Musical Conservatorium of Kolozsvár/Cluj possess distinctive traits, and if so, what are the traits distinguishing this institution from other contemporary institutions of the region?

### Summary of results

1. Starting with the 1820s, the general framework of the national romantic movement, the contemporary political ideals, as well as the art-concept of the biedermeier era provided fertile ground for civil society and for the founding of different civil societies. Kolozsvár/Cluj was

the both the political centre of Transylvania (parliamentary assemblies were held here), as well as an academic centre (with Roman-Catholic, Reformed and Unitarian colleges) and a cultural centre where passion for theatre had a longstanding tradition.

The founding of the Musical Society took place mainly thanks to the sponsorship of *Bánffy György*, governor of Transylvania, whose generous contribution earlier facilitated also the activities of the Transylvanian Society for the Promotion of Hungarian Language. The act of foundation and the immediate start of the educational process represent not only a noble intent *per se*, meant to “promote the nation”, but its efficiency resulted in measurable professional results during the timeframe in question. Between 1819-1823, for the first time in the history of Kolozsvár/Cluj the possibility to study music was granted to all children over 10 years and young adults, without discrimination on social, gender or religious grounds and without paying tuition fee. In this period, the Musical Society closely collaborated with the local theatre. After the death of its sponsor, the institute suspended its activity and reopened its gates in 1829.

The educational process was resumed and – after internal restructuring and alternating names – the institution formulated its mission of statement in 1836: to function solely as an institution (the Musical Conservatorium) ensuring professional musical education. The institution was presided by count *Mikes János* with *Ruzitska György* as musical director and the period under administration (lasting until the 1848 revolution) marks a significant improvement in the

quality of the education process. Means of quality assurance and implementation include periodically reevaluated curricula, a broader spectrum of theoretical and special disciplines, instruction differentiated by level of knowledge acquired, aspiration for continuing education on higher level, as well as course material used.

As far as social status and professional reception goes, the institution enjoyed positive response – efforts in obtaining this type of positive acceptance include hiring highly trained faculty members, a number of outstanding alumni, the repertoire of public concert-exams and their critical acclaim, as well as the cogent use of the term “national” (=nationwide) referring to the Musical Conservatorium in the press and in official publications. After the defeat of the 1848 revolution, musical instruction was resumed in 1859, by which time the Conservatorium already enjoyed the support of the local council. No interruptions are registered anymore in the activity of the institution, not even the death of its charismatic director could shake its stability – the Conservatorium remained a constant factor of the Kolozsvár/Cluj system of education and until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century continued to follow the general principles guiding the modern Hungarian education in the field of arts.

2. During its history, the Musical Society to Kolozsvár/Cluj and its school of musical instruction was forced to interrupt its activities due to financial constraints and reorganization. This is the reason for the frequent change in the name of the institution: first

“Society for Music” (Muzsikai Egyesület), then “Institute for Music” (Muzsikai Intézet), followed by “Musical Diligence Society” (Muzsikai Szorgalom Társaság), Musical or Music Conservatorium (Muzsikai Conservatorium, Zene-Conservatorium). Sometimes the name was used completed with a reference to the city’s name (“kolozsvári”) or with a reference to its noble social status (“noble Conservatorium”).

The confrontation and correlation of name and institution are by no means arbitrary, because sources indicate that the main objectives and primary function have remained unaltered and the art activity of the Musical Society – after the two interruption – continued based on the same personal and financial requirements and within the same legal framework. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the foundation year (1819) was incorporated into the official seal of the Conservatory of Kolozsvár/Cluj, thus acknowledging the school of the former Musical Society as its predecessor (and preserving its collection of documents and sheet music).

The forms and the process of institutional evolution is presented also in light of possessor insignia and official manifestations of the institute (seals, memoranda, request submitted in front of the Transylvanian Parliament or in front of the local council, honorary memberships and the activity of organizing concerts).

3. Under the auspices of national culture, even the founders of the Musical Society envisioned a function as theatre training studio, but the curricula of the institution do not contain subjects required by contemporary actors’

training (declamation, mimics, foreign languages). Since 1821, the year the permanent home of the theatre was festively opened, the musical ensemble of the Conservatorium (in which students were always included) has been for years a collaborating partner for theatre groups performing in the city. In the relevant timeframe, outstanding canto and musical instruments students often performed in theatre plays and concerts. Student participation in musical and theatre performances as well as in concerts could be defined accordingly as traineeship and informal education.

The PhD-paper offers for the first time concluding information regarding the participation of students from the Roman-Catholic, Reformed and Unitarian Colleges. This type of early collaboration is significant for the better comprehension of how music groups in colleges, and later singing groups and choirs functioned and how music came to be included as special discipline in school curricula.

4. *Georg Ruzitska*<sup>1</sup>, leader of the Musical Conservatorium between 1836-1869 taught singing, harmony and the violoncello in the music school of the town Cluj. Although he worked only as assistant teacher besides his capacity as director, the didactic structure he edited and his Hungarian musical methods were of great effect to the curriculum and the spirit of the educational

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<sup>1</sup> *Georg Ruzitska* (1786, Vienna-1869, Cluj) composer, regens chori, active pedagogue. Author of singing, violin, piano, organ and harmony-methods, he was a key figure in the musical life of the Transilvanian town in the 1820-40s.

institute. Along the printed and manuscript singing methods and other syllabuses, musical dedications to his students, including the disciples of the school in Cluj were present through all his compositional stages. *Ruzitska* used in the Transilvanian institute the era's leading musical and pedagogical method (techniques of bel-canto, the *Bell-Loncaster* or monitor method). During his leadership, the consolidation of curriculum, the different qualification-levels, enrichment of the theoretical disciplines (harmony, composition) lead to the professional stability and institutional status of the Musical Conservatorium.

5. Through the ideal of the musical education, the civil initiative, the noble sponsor, the abroad-studied musicians in leading role, adaptation of the French and Austrian models can be well traced in the founding of the Musical Society and its school (*Hondré*, 1996, *Steiner*, 1993, *Tari-Sz. Farkas*, 2005). Founded with both philanthropic and utilitarian objectives, based mainly on the singing education, the school's choice of the Biedermeier's instrumental preferences and the elementary musical level is parallel to the structure of the education of the Viennese Gesellschaft der Musikfreude (1817), the Innsbrucker Musikverein (1818), or the Hangászegyleti Zenede of Pest-Buda (1840) (*Tallián*, 2015). The public, ceremonial way of exams, active contribution of the students to the concerts of the society is also a similar trait.

But contrary to the era's musical societies, the Transylvanian institution started its school activities effective immediately, not at some later point following

the act of founding. Traced from the first ideas of the society's founding, a unique aspect consists in the demand and use of the national language in the process of education. The school in Kolozsvár/Cluj was a promoter of women's education: while the other musical institutions were late in allowing female students to join, the Transylvanian society allowed both sexes starting from 1819 (*Steiner*, 1993 and *Lakatos*, 1939).

### **Conclusions, possible directions of further research**

The research identified the political, personal and professional factors which contributed to the founding and the decades-long activity of the Musical Conservatorium of Kolozsvár/Cluj, until it reached the conservatory-level of institutional independence. The documents presented try to offer a detailed overview the institution's function from the point of cultural, educational and musical history. Governor Bánffy György's influence, the memoranda of support presented before the parliamentary assembly or the promotion of instruction in mother-tongue all stand proof for the statement that national policies in Hungary in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century included education in the field of arts.

Methods used in the process of musical education of the Conservatorium bring new information regarding the professional level of teaching and the reception and use of the era's pedagogical ideas.

For the first time, pedagogical works belonging to *Georg Ruzitska*, composer and conductor are thoroughly analyzed and contextualized in the framework of Eastern-European singing and instrumental methods.

The well-documented sources of the Transylvanian Saxons' cultural history, along with the presentation of the Hungarian structures offer a clearer image of the musical society's real function. Conclusions reflecting a wider, international spectrum can be made only after reviewing the closest analogies and possessing beforehand knowledge regarding the region's musical institutes (societies, confessional schools, residential bands') activities.

Research should be expended until the 1920 period of the Conservatorium. Institutional evolution of musical education in Transylvania offer points of interest for a broader research-group.

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